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Official Records

46th plenary meeting
Thursday, 4 November 1999, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Morel (Seychelles), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 52

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

The Acting President: I should like to inform representatives that, following consultations regarding agenda item 52 on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), and taking into account General Assembly decision 53/414 of 2 November 1998, it is proposed that the General Assembly decide to postpone consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session.

May I take it therefore that the Assembly, taking into account decision 53/414, wishes to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 52.

Agenda item 157

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Appointment of members of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its third meeting on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 157 to the Sixth Committee and also to consider it directly in plenary meeting.

Members will also recall that, on 8 December 1998, the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/104, entitled "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country". Paragraph 2 of that resolution reads as follows:

> "Endorses the recommendation of the Committee that its membership be increased by four members, including one each from African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean and Eastern Europe States, to be chosen by the President of the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 2819 (XXVI) of 15 December 1971, in consultation with the regional groups."

In this connection, members will further recall that, at the 94th meeting of the fifty-third session, on

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This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

18 February 1999, the President of the General Assembly appointed three members of the Committee from the African, Eastern European and Latin American and Caribbean States and that there still remains one member of the Committee to be appointed from among the Asian States.

I would now like to inform members that the President, after consultations with the Group of Asian States, has appointed Malaysia as a member of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to take note of this appointment?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: As a result of the appointment just made, the membership of the Committee stands as follows: Bulgaria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, France, Honduras, Hungary, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mali, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 157.

Agenda item 14

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/54/215)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.21)

The Acting President: It is now my pleasure to invite the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, to present the report of the Agency for the year 1998.

Mr. ElBaradei (International Atomic Energy Agency): The annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 1998 describes the Agency's major achievements in fulfilling its mandate during the year. I will describe some of these achievements and also identify some of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

I would like to begin with the Agency's work in the area of verification. IAEA safeguards constitute an indispensable component of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and move towards nuclear disarmament. During the year, the focus of our work has been on strengthening the safeguards system. In 1998, the Agency began implementation of measures contained in the Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements in States where the Protocol is already in force. These measures are designed to provide the Agency with greater access to information and sites so it can verify that no declared nuclear material has been diverted to non-peaceful uses and also to provide assurances that there is no undeclared material or activities. Work has also continued on developing a system which integrates traditional nuclear material verification activities with new strengthening measures, including those contained in the Additional Protocol. This system, which will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards, will be gradually introduced starting next year. It should enable the Agency to provide enhanced assurance to the international community that States that have comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols are using nuclear material exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The number of States that have not concluded safeguards agreements with the IAEA, despite their obligation to do so under various treaties, remains a matter of concern. Over the past year, the Agency has continued to remind these States of their obligation. With a view to next year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), I urge, in particular, the 52 NPT States without safeguards agreements in force to conclude and/or bring such agreements into force without further delay. The full potential of the strengthened safeguards system can be realized only through universal adherence to the Additional Protocol, and that, in turn, depends on all relevant safeguards agreements being in force.

I am pleased that in the past year 13 additional protocols have been approved by the Agency's Board of Governors, including 4 this past September. This brings the total of Additional Protocols approved to 45. Nonetheless, this number falls short of expectations. States have consistently stressed the importance of the strengthened safeguards system and universal adherence to the Additional Protocol to enhance the credibility of the non-proliferation regime. I thus appeal to all States that have not yet done so to conclude additional protocols at the earliest possible date.

The Agency is implementing a programme to assist member States in establishing and maintaining a system to protect nuclear and radioactive material from being used in any unlawful activities and in combating illicit trafficking in these materials. I have also convened an expert meeting for later this month to discuss the possibility of strengthening the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

It is some 10 months since the Agency's last inspection in Iraq under the relevant Security Council resolutions. One year ago we were cautiously optimistic that the Agency would be able to proceed with the full implementation of its monitoring and verification plan. This has not happened. The Security Council continues to search for modalities to resume verification activities in Iraq. At present, however, the Agency cannot provide any measure of assurance regarding Iraq's compliance with its obligation under those resolutions. I should, however, emphasize that the Agency continues to be ready to resume its activities in Iraq at short notice.

The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains unchanged. The Agency is still unable to verify that all nuclear material subject to safeguards in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been declared to it. We continue to monitor the "freeze" on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities, as requested by the Security Council, but the measure of cooperation we receive continues to be limited. And, despite 12 rounds of technical discussions, there is still no progress on important issues, such as the preservation of relevant information which would enable the Agency to verify the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's inventory of nuclear material subject to safeguards. As I have indicated before, without this information it will be difficult in the future, if not impossible, to verify the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's compliance with its Non-Proliferation Treaty safeguards agreement. It is my hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be in a position soon to normalize its relations with the Agency and also increase the level of its cooperation. This is in the interest of both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the international community.

The Agency's safeguards system is only one part of the overall non-proliferation regime. Although the effectiveness of safeguards is critical in this regime, other mutually reinforcing elements must also be at work. These include effective export control, adequate physical protection of nuclear material and facilities, accelerated steps towards nuclear disarmament and an appropriate arrangement for global and regional security.

One of the new opportunities facing the Agency is in the area of nuclear arms control and reduction. I would like to report that the IAEA has continued its work on a joint initiative with the Russian Federation and the United States. The initiative focuses on Agency verification that fissile material removed from weapons programmes of the two States remains definitely in non-military activities. Work continued during the year on the development of a proposed prototype inspection system that might allow the Agency inspectors to carry out their verification duties without having access to classified weapons information. Work on the drafting of a model verification agreement is also progressing.

The Conference on Disarmament continued its discussion during the year on issues relating to the negotiation of a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosives. In line with an earlier General Assembly resolution, I have indicated to the President of the Conference the Agency's readiness to assist in developing the verification system for such a treaty. At the request of a number of States, the Secretariat has been providing expert advice and information on its experience in relevant areas.

It is obvious that verification in the area of nuclear arms control and reduction will pose a challenge for the Agency in terms of resource requirements. To this end, I presented to our Board of Governors earlier this year some possible options for financing Agency verification of such future measures. The report focused on the principles that could govern such funding and the various possible mechanisms which include the establishment of a nuclear arms control and reduction fund based on assessed contributions. I emphasized in my report that whatever the financial arrangements agreed upon, they should ensure reliable and predictable funding. It is a statutory responsibility and a long-standing tradition for the Agency to accept all verification requests, and we should continue to be able to do so.

I turn now to the Agency's work in the area of nuclear technology. Our mandate here is clear: to maximize the ability of member States to make full use of this technology for their economic and social development.

With regard to nuclear power, I should mention two issues that are of current concern. One is the need to

meet increasing energy demands, particularly for electricity, and the other is the need to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions as agreed under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Nuclear power is one of the few energy options that can provide large-scale electricity generation and do so without greenhouse gas emissions.

At the end of 1998, over 400 nuclear power reactors in more than 30 countries were producing about 16 per cent of the world's electricity. Sixteen countries relied on nuclear power for 25 per cent or more of their electricity supply. The choice of nuclear power and of a particular energy mix is necessarily a country's specific decision that takes into account the country's respective circumstances, needs and priorities. States should, however, be able to make that decision on the basis of up-to-date and complete information. In this context and in cooperation with eight other international organizations, the Agency has continued its programme to assist member States in developing their capacity for decision-making in the energy sector. With specialized databases and methodologies, States can now conduct comparative evaluations of available energy options, taking into account environmental, economic and risk factors throughout the fuel cycle. Currently, over 90 countries are using these tools. We are also contributing to the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and working with other organizations to prepare for discussions on energy by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 2001. Our aim is to see that nuclear power is given a full and fair hearing in that important forum.

A key factor for national Governments in reaching decisions about the potential use of nuclear power will be their ability to assess the viability of advanced technologies. The Agency has an interregional technical cooperation project that is bringing together technology suppliers and prospective end-users for the development of integrated nuclear desalination programmes. In Morocco, the Agency has assisted in the preparatory work for a small nuclear reactor for desalination purposes. And the Republic of Korea is inviting member States to participate in its design of the System-integrated Modular Advanced Reactor (SMART). Another example of the potential use of advanced nuclear technology is provided by South Africa, where the Agency is currently assisting in carrying out a feasibility study and a safety review of a new design for a prototype pebble bed reactor.

I should note that despite its environmental advantage, nuclear power is at a standstill in Western Europe and North America, although it continues to expand in a few rapidly developing countries in Asia and in parts of Eastern Europe. In my view, a resurgence of nuclear power depends on action on three crucial fronts: further improvement in economic competitiveness, continued improvement in the global safety record, including waste management, and the restoration of public confidence.

The Agency's activities relating to nuclear technology extend well beyond nuclear power and its fuel cycle to cover many non-power applications. The Agency holds some 400 technical meetings on various topics in nuclear science and technology annually. It also operates its own research and service laboratories and coordinates research and information exchange in the many uses of nuclear techniques and radioisotopes in order to increase food production, to protect the environment, to fight disease and to manage water resources. Technical cooperation under our programme, which amounted to some $80 million in 1998, assists our Member States to ensure the appropriate and efficient use of nuclear techniques within their national development strategies, through training, expert advice and equipment procurement.

To illustrate the range of our work, I will mention briefly just a few of the examples where nuclear techniques are making a difference. Let me start with agriculture. The Agency is currently assisting several countries in the Middle East in studies on fertigation — the application of fertilizers through drip irrigation. The benefits of this technique include increased crop yields and more efficient use of water.

In Belarus, over 1 million hectares of prime agricultural land was contaminated after the Chernobyl accident in 1986. The Agency's technical cooperation projects have been instrumental in ensuring that rapeseed now cultivated in the area can be safely used for cooking oil and lubricants. The projects aim at accelerated decontamination of the land, the return of farmers to their land and the creation of jobs. The Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture is providing the technical backstopping for this assistance.

Human health is an area where nuclear techniques are becoming increasingly important. Let me quote just one example here. Neonatal thyroid deficiency, which can lead to mental retardation and stunted growth, is a curable illness if detected immediately after birth. During the last 10 years, the IAEA has been assisting health authorities in a number of countries in introducing

appropriate technology for neonatal screening programmes. Using technology introduced by the Agency, Thailand is expected to test all of its newborns — 1.2 million children per year by the year 2002. In Latin America, over 3 million newborns per year are being screened under programmes initiated by the Agency.

Freshwater scarcity is a problem that could affect two thirds of the world's population by the year 2025. An Agency-sponsored project, implemented jointly by Peru and Bolivia, uses isotope techniques and geochemical tools in helping the authorities accurately measure the water recharge of Lake Titicaca. Knowledge of the inflow and outflow of the lake's water is crucial for the effective management of water resources in the two countries. The project will enable both Peru and Bolivia to take scientifically based decisions regarding the amounts of water available for human consumption, irrigation and industrial use.

Another regional project, involving Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco and Senegal, has helped the countries concerned in mapping, evaluating and managing groundwater resources with the overall objective of providing drinking water for their populations on a sustainable basis. Working within the framework of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements/United Nations Environment Programme joint initiative called Managing Water for African Cities, the IAEA will provide technical support in using isotope techniques, together with non-nuclear techniques, to help develop urban water management policies.

I now turn to the issue of nuclear safety. A demonstrated global record of safety in all activities through the nuclear fuel cycle is a key to public confidence in nuclear power. In recent years, since the Chernobyl accident, the global safety record of nuclear power plants has shown general improvement. However, continuous efforts are required to ensure that the technical and human requirements of safety culture are maintained at the highest possible level. The accident a few weeks ago at the Tokaimura nuclear fuel conversion facility in Japan is a case in point. It is an illustration of the fact that accidents can occur if the required level of vigilance is not sustained.

With regard to that accident, the Agency was in early contact with the Japanese authorities to offer assistance and to transmit information to the international community as it became available. A team of IAEA nuclear safety specialists undertook a mission to Japan last month to ascertain the facts relating to the accident. The report will be issued shortly. The team also discussed with the Japanese authorities the possibility of a more comprehensive review of the accident. Such reviews have proved in the past to be a useful means of allowing other countries to learn from incidents that have occurred.

Safety is a national responsibility. But we learned the hard way after Chernobyl that international cooperation on all safety-related matters is indispensable. Over the past year, the Agency has continued to contribute to the development of an effective worldwide safety regime. This regime comprises international conventions that prescribe the fundamental legal norms for the safe use of nuclear energy; internationally accepted safety standards; and measures to assist States in implementing these conventions and standards.

The first review meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, held earlier this year, demonstrated the strong commitment of contracting parties to achieve and maintain a high level of safety at all nuclear installations. The meeting highlighted, *inter alia*, the fact that legislative frameworks are well established in most countries and that operational feedback systems are in place. Contracting parties to the Convention took note of many factors which could have a significant impact on nuclear safety if not counterbalanced by appropriate actions. Such factors include deregulation of electricity markets and lack of sufficient economic resources. Several contracting parties have taken action to meet the challenges posed by such factors.

One safety concern to which I wish to call attention is the threat to public health arising from "orphan" radioactive sources. These are radiation sources that are not under the control of national authorities. During the year under review, IAEA experts were sent to check the radiological impact of such sources found in Georgia, Peru and Turkey, and to provide assistance in taking the necessary protective measures. I am pleased to report that the IAEA General Conference last month adopted an action plan on the safety of radiation sources and security of material, which, among other things, details what the IAEA response should be.

Another concern regards the safety of research reactors. More than 600 research reactors have been built; of these, 344 have been shut down, although only 106 have been decommissioned. The Agency is focusing on upgrading regulatory infrastructure and providing safety reviews and advisory services to assist States confronting issues such as ageing and decommissioning.

A major issue in the debate over the use of nuclear technologies is the safety of the management of spent fuel and of radioactive waste. An Agency-sponsored international symposium recently confirmed the view that technologies exist for the safe, environmentally sound and cost-effective management of radioactive waste. The opinion of experts is that high-level waste and spent fuel can be safely isolated in certain types of deep geological repositories. However, a number of States are now opting for long-term storage of waste in order not to foreclose future options. Research is under way on the feasibility of disposing of waste in a manner that is reversible so that, if it is so decided, the waste can be retrieved in the future. Research also continues on technologies to reduce the quantities and radioactivity of high-level waste. In my view, only when final high-level waste repositories are built will the public start to perceive and accept that the waste issue has been resolved. this would be a substantial achievement in coming years. The Agency has been assisting member States in the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste, through the development of safety standards and technology transfer as well as with advisory missions.

Finally, on the question of safety, I wish to report that over the past year, the Agency has acted as a focal point in assisting member States to adequately address the Y2K issue in respect of nuclear facilities as well as medical facilities that use radiation sources. I urge all States to make every effort to ensure that these facilities are Y2K compliant.

It is clear from this review of the Agency's activities that our agenda is growing. In a continuing environment of zero-real-growth budgets, the challenge is how to close the gap between priorities and affordability.

We have in the past year advanced on several fronts in our efforts to improve the planning, implementation and evaluation of our activities. A draft medium-term strategy has been prepared, outlining the Agency's goals and objectives for the five-year period 2001 to 2005, and the means proposed to meet these objectives. Formulation of the programme and budget, which will be based on the objectives set out in the medium-term strategy, will follow a structured process for assessing member States' needs and priorities and will identify expected results and set performance indicators. Effective implementation will be coordinated within the secretariat and be results-based. It will be complemented by a strengthened evaluation process to ascertain the extent to which our goals have been attained and to build on lessons learned.

I would also like to stress the importance we are giving to reaching out to both traditional and new partners. Effective interaction with member States, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and the public is fundamental to the Agency's ability to maintain broad support in delivering its programme. In June, I approved a new public information and outreach policy intended to enhance this interaction. Part of this effort will focus on establishing a dialogue with the nuclear development and arms control communities. The strategy should help the international community assess objectively the value of the various utilizations of nuclear science and technology.

I should also mention that one of the outcomes of this year's session of the General Conference was the reaching of agreement, after many years of discussion, on an amendment to the Agency's statute, which would have the effect, when it enters into force, of expanding the membership of the Board of Governors from 35 to 43 member States, in order to take account of the increase in the number of developing countries in the Agency's membership.

In conclusion, let me repeat that the *Annual Report* before the Assembly describes in detail the work of the Agency in 1998, outlines progress and identifies work that remains to be done. I am very pleased to be able to report that at the session of the Agency's General Conference which concluded last month consensus was reached on all issues discussed by our member States. I hope, as we look to the new millennium, we will together be guided by the understanding that only through international cooperation and mutual accommodation can we make progress in regard to some of the most pressing issues facing us: fighting poverty, maintaining and enhancing peace and security and protecting our environment. These are all issues to which the IAEA contributes and is fully committed.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Austria, which continues to be our gracious and generous host.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.21.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): Allow me to congratulate Director General ElBaradei on the comprehensive presentation of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The period covered by the report, his

first full year in office, confirmed our perception that, with professionalism and dedication, the Director General strengthens all aspects of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the field of atomic energy. His experience as a diplomat, international civil servant and scholar are now combined in a leadership function for which he deserves to be commended.

I wish here to reiterate our pledge of cooperation with the Agency and its work. Special reference should be made to the importance of what the Director General calls the pillars of the Agency's work: technology, safety and verification. The impact of the Agency's efforts in promoting the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as in verifying that nuclear materials are not used for military purposes, is even more relevant these days.

Brazil has participated in the activities of the Agency since its inception. In 1956, when the Conference adopted the Agency's statute, it was presided over by Brazilian Ambassador João Carlos Muniz. Today, Brazil is honoured to introduce, in its capacity as Chairman of the IAEA Board of Governors, draft resolution A/54/L.21, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The text before us reflects the most important issues raised in the report Director General ElBaradei just presented, as well as the relevant resolutions adopted, all by consensus, by the forty-third session of the IAEA General Conference. I would like briefly to highlight the main contents of this draft.

Reaching agreement on the amendment of article VI of the statute, concerning the membership of the Board of Governors — an issue that has been discussed for most of the last quarter century — was no doubt a major breakthrough in this year's session of the General Conference. Accordingly, draft resolution A/54/L.21 dedicates a specific operative paragraph to the expansion of the membership of the Board from 35 to 43 members.

The draft resolution also focuses on a crucial element of the non-proliferation regime — safeguard agreements — and their direct bearing on verification and confidence-building. Due attention is given to the imperative of strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of safeguard systems with a view to detecting undeclared nuclear activities. In this regard, we wish to highlight the role of the Model Additional Protocol, approved in May 1997.

Over the years, increasing priority has been given to nuclear safety. The entry into force in October 1996 of the Convention on Nuclear Safety provided the international community with an important instrument on this matter. The draft resolution expresses satisfaction with the outcome of the first review meeting of the contracting parties and the expectation that further improvements can be made in particular areas identified during the meeting.

As in previous resolutions, this draft addresses the international community's concerns in the field of nuclear energy with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iraq. It expresses deep concern about the continuing non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the safeguards agreement with the Agency and calls upon that country to fully comply with the agreement. In regard to inspections in Iraq, the text stresses the need for full implementation of all Security Council resolutions and asks Iraq to allow immediate resumption of the Agency's ongoing monitoring and verification activities.

The draft resolution Brazil is introducing today is the result of hard work, cooperation and understanding between delegations in Vienna. Brazil is grateful for the genuine efforts of all delegations, which enabled us to achieve a balanced text. We are confident that this draft resolution is indeed a fair and accurate reflection of the main issues dealt with by the Agency during the period under review. On behalf of the sponsors — which are now joined by Finland and Slovakia, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Board of Governors, and also by Argentina and Bosnia and Herzegovina — I would also like to express our appreciation for the support and cooperation received in Vienna and here from the secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency and that of the United Nations.

I would like to convey to the President the sentiment among delegations, which continue consultations on a specific part of the text, that the draft resolution is not yet ready for adoption. It is therefore suggested that he consider postponing action on the draft resolution in order to allow for a few pending issues to be resolved among interested delegations.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia

and Slovenia — and the associated countries, Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Liechtenstein and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

It is a great pleasure for me to note that during his first full year as the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei has launched several commendable initiatives. The European Union gives its full support to all initiatives that are aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's programmes, activities and administration.

The European Union appreciates the introduction of the draft medium-term strategy — a unified approach that is based on the three pillars of technology, safety and verification. The European Union welcomes this holistic approach to strategic planning, which includes Agency-wide prioritization as a key element and which should form the basis for programme and budget proposals in the medium term.

Since the priorities vary considerably among the member States, the European Union stresses that the dialogue on Agency-wide prioritization — notably in the Board of Governors — is crucial. Such a dialogue should be based on an objective assessment of technological as well as financial aspects, while recognizing the different needs of the various member States and having due regard for the Agency's statutory responsibilities. The result must be a strategy that sets out clearly the priority areas, lays down appropriate success criteria and establishes criteria for phasing out certain outdated or low-priority activities. This would enable financial and human resources to be allocated to higher-priority activities, many of which have had to be funded from extrabudgetary resources. The European Union is of the view that all statutory activities should be funded from the regular budget.

For the European Union, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The European Union continues to support the Agency's role in safeguarding nuclear material and facilities, especially within the framework of the NPT, and has actively promoted the universal conclusion of the additional protocols. The European Union calls on all non-nuclear-weapon States to conclude and ratify comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA, as well as the additional protocols to them. Furthermore, the European Union invites those States that have no comprehensive safeguards agreement to negotiate additional protocols with the Agency, as provided for in the foreword of the Model Protocol. In this context, the European Union welcomes Cuba's signature of Cuba of an additional protocol.

The European Union also supports the repeated statements by the Director General that the implementation of an integrated safeguards system is a matter of the highest priority. However, the European Union stresses that the introduction of new measures should not be regarded simply as an addition to existing measures. The two systems must be properly integrated to make optimal use of all possible synergies, leading to more effective use of resources and inspection efforts.

The situation regarding the implementation of safeguards in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is still a subject of serious concern to the European Union. We continue to be disturbed by the fact that despite efforts by the Agency, no progress has been made on any of the important issues outstanding since 1994. The European Union again strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with its safeguards agreement with the Agency at the earliest possible time, and to cooperate fully with the Director General.

More than 10 months have elapsed since the Agency was able to carry out inspections in Iraq. As a result, the Agency has not been able to implement its mandate in Iraq under the relevant Security Council resolutions and is thus unable to provide any measure of assurance regarding Iraq's compliance with its obligations under those resolutions. The European Union considers it a matter of urgency that the monitoring and verification activities of the Agency in Iraq be re-established without delay.

Ensuring that a high level of nuclear safety is in place throughout the world is of primary importance to the European Union. The European Union calls on the Agency to emphasize that safety aspects must be taken into account at an early stage in the design of any nuclear facility. The European Union is of the view that while the responsibility for the safe design, construction and operation of a nuclear installation rests with the State having jurisdiction over such an installation, international cooperation is needed to ensure that internationally accepted levels of nuclear safety are in place everywhere. As a reflection of this, the European Union is a major

contributor — through its large Poland-Hungary Aid for the Reconstruction of the Economy (PHARE) and Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programmes, and also through the bilateral activities of its member States with recipient States — to the international efforts to help the States of Eastern and Central Europe, including all members of the Commonwealth of the Independent States, to improve nuclear safety. Noteworthy advances have taken place in these countries, but in some cases much still remains to be done.

The European Union is paying special attention to nuclear safety in the ongoing enlargement process of the Union. Adequate progress on nuclear safety issues is essential for the success of the enlargement process.

The first review meeting on the implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety was held in April 1999. The meeting was very successful in showing that the Convention is a valuable instrument for international efforts to assess and improve the levels of nuclear safety. The European Union is looking forward to future review meetings. In addition to aspects identified in respect of improvements to the review process itself, the EU stresses the need for the contracting parties to the Convention to exercise greater openness and transparency. It is also important that the contracting parties at the next review meeting can report substantial progress in areas where a need for safety improvement was identified.

The European Union hopes that this encouraging example of the functioning of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and its review process will further the early signing and ratification of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

The European Union commends the intensive work which the Agency has undertaken in helping operators and regulators to develop suitable Y2K compliance programmes. The EU will continue to give support to that work in the run-up to the new millennium, now less than two months away.

The technical cooperation programme is an important component of the Agency's activities. The strong support of the European Union for the technical cooperation programme is demonstrated by the high level of voluntary contributions of EU member States to the Technical Cooperation Fund, in 1998 accounting for about 30 per cent of the Fund's realized total. However, the European Union stresses that the technical cooperation programme as a whole should be given careful consideration in the light of the Agency's mandate and the existing budgetary constraints. The EU also considers that it must be in the interest of the recipient State and the Agency to ensure proper coordination between the Agency's technical cooperation activities in the country and those of other organizations, with a view to achieving synergies and avoiding duplication. Furthermore, the European Union believes that the technical assistance provided by the Agency should be fully matched to national development programmes, and that it is primarily the responsibility of the recipient State to ensure that this is so.

The primary tool in combating illicit trafficking in nuclear materials is the physical protection of such materials, the responsibility for which remains entirely with individual States. The European Union supports the Agency's activities in revising its recommendations for the physical protection of nuclear materials and through the International Physical Protection Advisory Service, and in the provision of guidelines and training.

The European Union is pleased to note that the Agency has strengthened its activities aimed at combating illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and at enhancing the safety of radiation sources and security of radioactive materials. The Agency has further developed its programme on the security of material and established commendable cooperation with the European Commission, the World Customs Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), with a view to developing guidelines.

The European Union notes with satisfaction that, after difficult discussions extending over a number of years, the forty-third General Conference of the Agency adopted a resolution on the amendment of article VI of the Statute of the IAEA relating to the composition of its Board of Governors. Although the EU did not deem it necessary to enlarge the size of the Board, it joined the consensus on a package which includes, in addition to the expansion of the Board from 35 to 43 members, a decision on the composition of area groups and criteria to be used in designating Board members.

The Director General of the IAEA has expressed the readiness of the Agency secretariat to assist in verification related to nuclear-arms reduction. The European Union believes it to be especially important that fissile material designated by any nuclear-weapon State as no longer required for defence purposes be placed under

an appropriate system of safeguards under the IAEA. We all have to devote more consideration to the options for financing these new verification arrangements. The EU welcomes the efforts aimed at setting up verification mechanisms and the further measures envisaged within the framework of the trilateral talks between the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the IAEA, as well as the decision by a number of States to adopt a set of guidelines for the management of plutonium in all peaceful activities.

For a considerable time, the European Union has steadfastly supported the commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a multilateral and internationally binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The European Union stands ready to discuss a verification role for the Agency in respect of such an agreement.

The year 2000 NPT Review Conference will soon be upon us. The European Union supports and promotes the implementation of the NPT and the decisions of the 1995 NPT Review Conference, in particular the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and the decision on strengthening the review process of the Treaty. A successful outcome to the year 2000 NPT Review Conference is vital to our common endeavour to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and further nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express the gratitude of the delegation of Mexico to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the report on the work of the Agency for 1998.

My delegation is pleased at the recent approval, at the forty-third session of the General Conference of the IAEA, of the applications of Honduras and Angola, which increases the number of member States of the Agency to 131.

I should also like to stress Mexico's satisfaction at the approval by consensus, at the General Conference, of the amendment to article VI of the Statute of the IAEA, following 25 years of negotiations. The ratification of this amendment by two-thirds of the membership of the IAEA will make possible the expansion of the membership of the Board of Governors from 35 to 43 and the assignment of each member State to one of the areas listed in the article. The amendment will thus certainly enhance the participation and commitment of all regions to the goals and work of the Agency.

Mexico attaches great importance to the safeguards activities of the Agency, as well as to their development and the application of measures to strengthen them. We hope that the excellent cooperation between the Governments of the United States and of the Russian Federation and the IAEA with regard to verification activities for surplus fissile material will continue so that such material will not be reused in nuclear weapons.

The Government of Mexico supports the measures that were adopted last September by the Board of Governors designed to control the fissile materials neptunium and americium, on the basis that such transuranic elements, once they are separated in the reprocessing or purification of plutonium, could, in sufficiently large quantities, be used to manufacture explosive nuclear devices.

Nuclear, radiation and radioactive waste safety has become especially important in recent years, not only as a means of avoiding harm to life, health and the environment and providing guarantees to humankind that nuclear equipment and materials are operated efficiently, but also because, to a large extent, safe practices will determine whether nuclear energy becomes a part of our energy options for the future.

Mexico is pleased at the positive results of the first review meeting of the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, held in April 1999, in which Mexico participated as a full-fledged member. We support the implementation of the recommendations issued by that meeting to improve the safe management of nuclear materials and equipment.

We would like to express our gratitude to the IAEA secretariat for strengthening the set of safety standards. The activities of the Agency in that area have been strengthened by the adoption of additional standards for the safe management and transportation of radioactive waste and for the security of nuclear power stations, which were approved by the Board of Governors, as well as by the adoption of resolutions in the General Conference on the radiological protection of patients, the safety of transport of radioactive materials and the security of radiation sources.

Finally, my delegation would like to stress the importance of the IAEA's initiative to create regional centres with the task of propagating horizontal cooperation. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, this will help channel various initiatives and Agency projects in close consultation and coordination with member States of our region. Once again we appeal for a strengthening of the Technical Cooperation Fund. Mexico attaches the highest priority to the Agency's technical cooperation activities, as they are an essential element of its mandate and an integral part of the contract enshrined in the Agency's statute.

Mr. Wulf (United States of America): My delegation would like to commend the Director General for his report. We note with appreciation his continued outstanding performance this year in support of the important contributions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to international peace and prosperity.

We stand at the threshold of a new millennium. As we look back on the century quickly fading into history, we cannot but marvel at the dramatic sweep of technological development that has characterized the past 100 years. Among the most remarkable of these developments is the harnessing of nuclear technology for an almost endless variety of peaceful applications. The ability of the international community to pursue this goal successfully can be attributed in no small measure to the work of the IAEA.

Since the end of the Second World War, the development of the peaceful applications of nuclear technology has been possible only because of broad international agreement that this development must take place within the context of clearly defined conditions. Through its unique system of international safeguards, the IAEA facilitates worldwide peaceful nuclear cooperation by providing critical assurance that nuclear materials and technology are not being misused for non-peaceful purposes. Safeguards and peaceful nuclear cooperation truly go hand in hand. The breadth of peaceful nuclear cooperation under IAEA auspices is particularly noteworthy. The Agency is currently engaged in nuclear development projects with over 90 of its member States, including important work in a number of developing countries. Projects range from medical applications to work in agriculture and basic industry. The United States recognizes the value of the Agency's diverse programmes in promoting the quality of human life in many countries and is pleased to be a major contributor to this work.

The new approach used by the Department of Technical Cooperation, known as the Strategy for Technical Cooperation, has increased efficiency in implementing this important programme. The "one team" concept espoused by the Director General is truly bearing fruit as the Agency's various departments work even more closely together to implement an effective technical cooperation programme. The building blocks of an improved programme are increasingly utilized, including model project criteria, thematic planning and country programme frameworks. These elements will be even more central to progress in the 2001 and 2002 programmes. It is also important that the evaluation of the programme and comparison of its goals and achievements should continue.

The diverse projects undertaken by the technical cooperation programme and their many benefits provide the world with a better understanding of how nuclear-related activities can be used to help solve difficult problems in human health, the environment, agriculture and industry. Continued work in these areas will benefit the citizens of all States in the next century and beyond. However, we must ensure that these benefits are widely enjoyed and, in particular, improve the plight of the world's poorest nations.

Inherent in all the cooperation that the IAEA pursues with its member States is the concept of nuclear, radiation and radioactive waste safety. Strengthening nuclear safety continues to be a central goal of the IAEA. Through the development of international conventions, internationally accepted safety standards and measures to assist States in implementing these conventions and standards, the IAEA consistently strives to strengthen safety worldwide. The United States was pleased to participate in the first review meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, hosted by the Agency. We found the meeting to be a most productive exchange among the many States parties to the Convention and look forward to future sessions. The support that the Agency provides to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency is invaluable. Similarly, the Agency's leadership in assisting States to deal with the Y2K computer problem is commendable. The United States affirms its strong support for the IAEA's work in nuclear safety throughout the world and its commitment to strengthen further these important activities.

Remarkable progress has been achieved over the years in defining and implementing the IAEA safeguards system. This system performs the essential function of verifying compliance with comprehensive safeguards agreements under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other nuclear non-proliferation treaties. The United States welcomes the close cooperation among IAEA member States and the secretariat, which produced the most recent evolution in the safeguards system, known as the Additional Protocol. Where implemented, this protocol will provide the Agency with a strengthened capability to detect undeclared nuclear material and activities. The United States reaffirms the importance of the Additional Protocol and commends those 45 States which have submitted their individual protocols for approval by IAEA Board of Governors. We urge all States to bring the agreed new safeguards measures into effect as quickly as possible. For its part, the United States continues its own implementation preparations for the submission of its protocol to the United States Senate for its advice on and consent to ratification.

The United States remains deeply concerned about Iraq's failure to comply with relevant Security Council obligations. It has been almost a year since the last inspections in Iraq were conducted by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the IAEA. Despite repeated urging, Iraq continues to reject resumption of these inspections, despite its obligations to do so. Meanwhile, as the Director General noted, the IAEA cannot provide any measure of assurance regarding Iraq's compliance with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions. Iraq's willingness in the past flagrantly to ignore these commitments serves as a grim reminder of the potential for a State to misuse nuclear material for non-peaceful purposes. The United States strongly believes that Iraqi compliance with its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions requires that Iraq permit UNSCOM or its successor organization to return to Iraq in tandem with the IAEA to resume their Council-mandated activities as soon as possible. We will continue dedicated efforts with others on the Security Council to deal with this serious threat to peace in the Middle East and beyond.

The United States also remains deeply concerned about the inability of the agency to verify the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear material made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will recognize the central importance of sincere cooperation with the IAEA in taking those steps deemed necessary by the IAEA to resolve this long-standing concern and permit continued progress under the agreed framework.

The United States commends the Agency's efforts relating to the security of nuclear material, and notes the many successful activities carried out under that programme. Through training courses, national and regional technical cooperation projects and the international physical protection advisory missions, the Agency has responded to requests by a number of member States. In particular, it has assisted them in establishing or improving the systems necessary to prevent nuclear material and other radioactive sources from being used for unauthorized purposes. The Agency is responsible for significant progress in the recapture of source materials that have been abandoned and in detecting and responding to illicit trafficking in such items. The Agency's efforts in improving physical protection guidelines and assisting States in implementing effective physical protection systems at the national and facility levels serve as major steps towards better control of illicit trafficking in nuclear material. Over the years, the IAEA has been committed to a diverse set of programmes that enhance the security, the health, the environment and the safety of the international community. It has done so with distinction. The IAEA's achievements, reflected in the report presented by the Director General, demonstrate the critical role of the Agency in encouraging cooperation in the many important peaceful uses of nuclear material and technology under sound non-proliferation conditions.

On behalf of my Government, I would like again to thank Mr. ElBaradei for the report and to commend the accomplishments of the Agency. We look forward to continued cooperation with the IAEA to promote its essential contribution to international peace and security.

Mr. Jusys (Lithuania): It is a great honour to have among us the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, who has been leading the Agency for two years. We continue to have the highest regard for the Agency's activities, not least due to the brilliant performance of its leadership. This year and last, the IAEA has lived up to our highest expectations. Lithuania is proud to be a member of an institution which sets an example of efficiency and respectability for many other international institutions.

Lithuania has aligned itself with the European Union statement, which covered most of what we would have

stated on our own account. I am here today to outline some specific issues from our national perspective.

For years, the share of nuclear energy in the total energy production of Lithuania has been the highest in the world. Four out of five houses in Lithuania are lit by nuclear energy. A single nuclear plant, near Ignalina in north-eastern Lithuania, accounts for that share of the national energy output. Naturally, the safety of the plant has been a national priority.

Nuclear facilities in Lithuania are run in a fully transparent manner. Transparency is the best tool for nuclear safety. It allows the best experts to know everything about the operation of large-capacity channel (RBMK) reactors. We believe that these installations, which were once considered dangerous because of their technology — primarily after the Chernobyl accident — have since proven to be sufficiently safe and useful if management is good and if safety measures are sound. Even the recent accident in Japan showed that it is human errors rather than nuclear technologies that pose dangers.

We are still working on upgrading the management of the Ignalina plant. Additional safety systems have been installed; a more enriched uranium is being used; an accident localization system can cope with all so-called design based accidents; and precautions against Y2K problems have been taken. With all these measures, I am confident that we are approaching a time when we can be without fear of the mysteries of atomic fusion. Nuclear power can also be a long-term solution to the difficult problems of depleted fossil energy resources, climate change and sustainable development.

Public opinion in Lithuania on nuclear power is changing as well. We are an environment-conscious society. Going back to the years when our independence movement emerged, political changes were brought about largely through environmental concerns that the Lithuanian people had during the occupation. The main object of those concerns was the Ignalina nuclear power plant. Controversy about the presence of the nuclear power plant in our environmentally vulnerable country, however, arises from a broader rethinking of our energy strategy in the light of European integration, rather than from the environmental or safety concerns of the Lithuanian people.

Nuclear power is one of the most environmentally friendly sources of energy. It has allowed us and other countries to sign the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change without commitments that would be detrimental to industrial development. I dare say that without nuclear energy there would be no prospect of preserving the global climate, for this would have been at the expense of sustainable development.

As a party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, Lithuania has followed with interest the examination of national reports on safety. Implementation of the Convention should serve as an objective factor in assessments of nuclear safety in particular countries. It is encouraging that no violations of the Convention were found during the First Review Meeting, held in 1999.

My Government acknowledges that our reactors will age to the point where they have to be stopped forever. According to the Lithuanian national energy strategy adopted a month ago by the Lithuanian Parliament, the first reactor of the Ignalina power plant is scheduled to be shut down by 2005. The date of the second unit's closure will be identified in the updated national energy strategy, to be promulgated in 2004. Agreement on early closure was achieved as a compromise in negotiations between the European Commission and the Lithuanian Government. Nothing suggests, however, that operation of the Ignalina nuclear power plant past those dates would be unsafe.

These dates, as well as the future of nuclear energy, are at the very top of the current Lithuanian political and economic agenda because decommissioning the Ignalina power plant will require more than the State's annual budget, let alone associated social costs. Lithuania will not be able to cope with such a change alone and will need international assistance. An international donors conference will therefore be held at the beginning of 2000 in Vilnius.

Regardless of its considerable benefits, nuclear energy is still problematic in one particular aspect: spent fuel and nuclear waste, its interim storage and final repository, especially in small States with limited industrial and scientific capabilities. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management partly answers this dilemma. We are looking forward to becoming a State party to the Convention. While awaiting its entry into force, Lithuania has obtained containers for spent nuclear fuel, thus putting off the final repository question for a fixed period of 50 years. Meanwhile, the Lithuanian Government is finalizing arrangements for the permanent

storage of spent nuclear fuel through national legislation and funds.

The IAEA is not only about the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Agency is essential for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We are concerned about the lack of progress in banning fissile material for nuclear weapons, the negotiations on which are yet to be launched in the Conference on Disarmament.

Our expectations about the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) have not corresponded to reality. The conference of parties and signatories of the CTBT, held a month ago in Vienna, offered some ways to bring a full and effective test-ban closer. Lithuania ratified the CTBT on 28 October of this year. In the meantime, the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBT Organization is already doing a splendid job, owing much to the assistance of the IAEA.

A general hope still lingers that the tests in India and Pakistan last year will be the last nuclear weapons explosions in human history. For this hope to come true, we need to take precautions against attempts to develop new nuclear weapons. It is regrettable and dangerous, however, that several States remain outside the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime and the IAEA safeguards. Equally worrisome is persistent non-compliance with the NPT by some of its States parties. The 2000 Review Conference will have to look at these challenges and find ways to make the NPT fully and truly universal.

This is a good occasion to commend the IAEA for the progressive improvement of the instruments used to verify compliance with the requirements of nuclear non-proliferation. In particular, we see strong merit in a new generation of verification methods based on remote monitoring of safeguards. These methods will open avenues for more discreet and yet more effective control of nuclear activities.

Lithuania does everything in its capacity so that the expertise of the Agency will be utilized for the sake of a safer and more secure world. With this in mind, we were one of the first to sign an additional protocol to the agreements between Lithuania and the IAEA for the application of safeguards, which we will ratify next year. We call on all other States to conclude additional protocols too.

We wish to see the draft resolution introduced by the Permanent Representative of Brazil adopted by consensus.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba is pleased to address the work carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), whose lofty objective, according to article II of its statute, is "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world." Cuba values very highly the efforts of the Agency in recent years in the areas of technical assistance and cooperation, safeguards, nuclear safety and security.

Development, promotion and technical cooperation activities are surely the most valuable and commendable endeavours of the Agency, and we believe it is the duty of all to work not only to maintain this cooperation but to strengthen and diversify it.

Nuclear energy is a safe alternative, technically feasible and economically viable, for meeting the energy needs that burden the large majority of countries that make up the international community. The experience of more than 40 years, and especially efforts made in recent decades, has shown all that can be achieved with proper, intelligent and rational use of nuclear technology. However, the full knowledge of the advantages of nuclear energy and of the economic and social situation of most countries, in particular of the developing countries, has not prevented some developed countries from maintaining attitudes counter to the objectives of the IAEA — trying to cut technical assistance programmes, decreasing their contributions to the fund created for such purposes or selectively putting conditions on the fund's use.

Our increasingly globalized world will be less viable if those States that as a result of certain historical situations have greater resources do not have a real will to contribute. These are the countries that have the greatest responsibility for contributing to a real transfer of technology, equally accessible to all and without conditions.

Cuba can testify to the benefits of the technical cooperation of the Agency. Throughout the years, we have achieved excellent results in the fields of health, agriculture and industry and in other applications. In many areas we are sending our experts to other countries, offering our installations for the training of foreign experts, and some of our products have even been used

for international cooperation projects in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

It is worth pointing out that in a recent meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Group with the Board of Governors of the IAEA, the Board reiterated the need to increase technical cooperation between the countries of our region through mechanisms such as the regional resource centre. The Board shared with us the view that technical cooperation is more effective when it is fully integrated in national development plans. In this context, the Programme of Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America (ARCAL) deserves a special mention; after 15 years of existence, it is an example of how much can be achieved through horizontal cooperation.

Despite the adoption of the programme to enhance technical assistance by the Agency, we believe that the programme has not received the same vigorous and integrated support as has the safeguards system. Thus, we now see a considerable imbalance between the two aspects of the work done by the Agency. The safeguards activities of the Agency tend to be strengthened on the basis of accumulated needs and experience. However, the fragility and discriminatory nature of the current non-proliferation regime can be corrected only through the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and of the threat embodied in the possession of such arms.

Nuclear-weapon States, in order to meet the commitment they entered into under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), must take specific steps towards nuclear disarmament. A legally binding commitment in this connection would enhance the credibility of a regime that was flawed from the very beginning, as it defines and recognizes five nuclear Powers and thus indefinitely divides the world into those who have and those who do not have these weapons.

If we look at this in the context of the IAEA, we must recall and regret the fact that, under article III of the NPT, only non-nuclear-weapon States are obligated to enter into safeguards agreements with the Agency with the aim of verifying these States' compliance with their obligations and preventing nuclear energy from being diverted from peaceful uses towards nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices.

As is known, Cuba is not a party to the NPT; therefore, it has no obligation whatsoever to negotiate safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency. This, however, has not prevented us from taking concrete steps that demonstrate our clear desire for peace and general and complete disarmament, as well as demonstrating the transparency and peaceful nature of the nuclear programme we are developing.

I have the honour to report to the plenary Assembly that last month Cuba signed a protocol additional to the safeguards agreements that it entered into on a voluntary basis with the IAEA. Thus it became the first country that has already entered into INFCIRC/66 safeguards agreements to have also signed this type of additional protocol with the IAEA.

This protocol was signed during the visit to Cuba of Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the IAEA, whose useful statement at the beginning of this meeting was most welcome. On the occasion of the signing we were able to show him some of the progress we have made and reiterate our political will to work for a strengthened, effective and efficient safeguards system, based on an equitable regime that will lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

I would also like to report that at that the recently concluded session of the IAEA General Conference, Cuba was elected a member of its Board of Governors, a post from which we will promote the realization of the aspirations and objectives expressed here.

Cuba cannot fail to reaffirm here its firm denunciation of the systematic attempts being made by one Member State of the United Nations to block, by various means, Cuba's nuclear programme, and especially our technical cooperation with the IAEA.

A severe economic, trade and financial blockade against Cuba, which has persisted unchanged for almost four decades, has impeded the transfer of nuclear technology to Cuba. Three years ago, the United States Congress adopted the Helms-Burton Act, which, among many other things, threatens that

> "the President [of the United States] should do all in his power to make it clear to the Cuban Government that the completion and operation of any nuclear power facility ... will be considered an act of aggression which will be met with an appropriate response in order to maintain the security of the national borders of the United States".

Likewise, the 1999 United States omnibus appropriations bill devotes two sections — 2809 and 2810 — to detailing means of blocking, by various means, the Cuban nuclear programme, especially the cooperation between the IAEA and Cuba. Those sections go so far as to include provisions to decrease assistance funds to third countries to the extent that they provide resources for the development of the Cuban nuclear programme — despite the fact that the programme is intended only for peaceful uses.

Such laws squarely contradict the statute of the IAEA and should therefore be repudiated by the international community.

Neither the infamous Helms-Burton Act, nor any other measures undertaken as part of the policy of hostility and aggression towards my country, can prevent us from continuing to make progress in the peaceful application of nuclear energy, from continuing to advocate nuclear disarmament or from continuing to demonstrate — modestly, honestly and transparently — our nuclear and moral resources.

Once again there is controversial wording in the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA, now before us in document A/54/L.21. It is a matter of concern that this has become a regular practice, despite the fact that it does not have the support of all the delegations.

As we deal with an important agency such as the IAEA, the resolution of the General Assembly taking note of its *Annual Report* should contain only elements on which there is consensus and reflect only those issues that have the support of all delegations. Cuba reiterates its objections to the continuation of this practice. It would be unfortunate if for these reasons, in contrast to what happens with regard to reports of other bodies, the draft resolution on the IAEA report continued to have to be adopted by a vote.

Mr. Kára (Czech Republic): Let me start by expressing appreciation for the International Atomic Energy Agency's report, which was introduced by the Agency's Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. We commend his performance in his responsible position.

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement of the European Union presented by the representative of Finland, and this allows me to confine my intervention to just a few comments.

The Czech Republic attaches utmost importance to the protocol additional to the safeguards agreement between our country and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which we signed with the Agency earlier this year. We believe that the implementation of the protocol will help increase the transparency of nuclear programmes of individual States and strengthen the Agency's ability to uncover undeclared uses of nuclear materials and nuclear energy for other than peaceful purposes.

As part of our commitments within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we have been applying a strict licensing regime in respect of exports and imports of all items subject to control in the field of the use of nuclear materials and nuclear energy. An important part of nuclear non-proliferation control is also the physical protection of nuclear materials and nuclear installations. Here I can state that all the IAEA's international missions that have inspected nuclear installations in the Czech Republic have confirmed that there was a high level of physical protection of nuclear materials and nuclear installations.

Mr. Jusys (Lithuania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Nuclear-power engineering constitutes an important part of the programme for the peaceful use of nuclear energy in the Czech Republic. We are of the view that nuclear power in our circumstances may have some positive environmental effects and help, among other things, to preserve our limited resources of fossil fuels for future generations. At the same time, the Government of the Czech Republic understands that a necessary prerequisite for the use of nuclear-power resources is the achievement of the maximum possible level of nuclear safety and radiation protection.

In this connection, in the past few years, our country has completed a fundamental reform of our legislative and regulatory framework. It reflects nearly 15 years of experience in the operation of four blocks of the Dukovany nuclear power plant, current international practice and, last but not least, the latest findings of science and research. Today, the Czech Republic has modern nuclear legislation and the mandate of its state supervisory body provides for sufficient independence, sources and competencies, facilitating the assessment of the level of nuclear safety and radiation protection within all activities related to the use of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation.

The Government of the Czech Republic also maintains a sensitive approach to the international dimension of nuclear safety and radiation protection. An example of this approach is the recent use by the Czech Republic of the mechanism of the Convention on Nuclear Safety to provide complex information on compliance with nuclear-safety and radiation-protection requirements in the nuclear power plants on the territory of the Czech Republic. We welcomed the openness of the discussion during the review process concluded at the first Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention, held in Vienna last April. The declared objective of the Convention is the achievement and preservation worldwide of a high level of nuclear safety through increased implementation of national measures and international cooperation. We therefore see the positive assessment of the Czech Republic by other Contracting parties to the Convention as confirmation of the high level of nuclear safety and radiation protection in our country. In this context, I would like to highly commend the work of the Agency, acting as the secretariat of the Convention and having largely contributed to the smooth course of the whole review process.

The use of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation and their development in the Czech Republic have been closely linked for a number of years with international cooperation and technical assistance programmes. The Czech Republic highly appreciates its programme of technical cooperation with the Agency. Within this framework, it acts both as the receiving country and as a donor.

Within its capacities, the Czech Republic has been making every effort to increase its participation in the Agency's technical assistance directed to the other member States. In 1998 and 1999, the Czech Government contributed $150,000 to a project aimed at the installation of a new system for non-destructive controls of VVER-1000 reactor pressure vessels in Ukraine. Apart from this, our State Office for Nuclear Safety committed itself to supporting in 1999-2000 the Agency's efforts within model projects aimed at increasing the level of radiation protection. We have also committed ourselves to training, in addition to standard contingents, 50 experts, in particular from countries of the former Soviet Union. The contribution of the Czech Republic to the success of the technical cooperation programme also includes the organization of a number of events in its territory. In 1999 alone, the country has organized 10 seminars and training courses.

In conclusion, I would like to express the Czech Republic's appreciation of the Agency's essential role in promoting international cooperation in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to reiterate the support of the Czech Republic for all initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's administration, programmes and activities.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): At the outset, allow me to thank Director General Mohamed ElBaradei for his thorough presentation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report. Furthermore, the Japanese Government extends a sincere welcome to the Governments of Honduras and Angola, which have recently become members of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We would also like to express our satisfaction that the long-standing issue of the amendment of article VI of the IAEA Statute was successfully resolved this year.

The Agency plays an increasingly important role in the areas of the peaceful uses of atomic energy as well as nuclear non-proliferation. In particular, I would like to stress the special importance of the IAEA safeguards in these areas. The Government of Japan strongly urges all relevant countries to comply fully with their respective safeguards agreement with the Agency. In this respect, Japan welcomes the adoption, at the forty-third session of the General Conference of the IAEA, of two resolutions — one on the implementation of the Agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and another on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq. We also appreciate the firmly maintained readiness of the nuclear-weapon States to accept IAEA safeguards.

Japan, for its part, is committed to further strengthening the IAEA safeguards and was one of the first countries to sign the Additional Protocol to its safeguards agreement, which is the legal framework for strengthening the safeguards system. The National Diet of Japan approved its ratification in July of this year and my Government is currently preparing for the implementation of the revised domestic legislation. We urge all member States which have not done so to become parties to the comprehensive safeguards agreement, as well as to the Additional Protocol to the safeguards agreement, as soon as possible.

Japan insists that the plutonium removed from dismantled nuclear weapons should not be recycled for

military purposes and should be disposed of safely and quickly. Therefore, we look forward to progress in the discussions between the United States, the Russian Federation and the IAEA on allowing the Agency to monitor the plutonium that is regarded as unnecessary for defence purposes. While recognizing the primary responsibility of those countries with nuclear arsenals for the management and disposal of plutonium, Japan believes that the international community should also offer support. In this spirit, Prime Minister Obuchi announced at the G-8 Summit held in Germany this year that Japan would provide approximately $200 million to support the former Soviet Republics in their work to dismantle nuclear weapons.

With regard to the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Government of Japan appreciates and welcomes the important progress achieved in the recent United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea talks. For our part, Japan has been actively participating in the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) light water reactor project, the preparation of which has reached the final stage. Under these circumstances, it is as important as ever for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully cooperate with the Agency in the implementation of its safeguards agreement. We strongly hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will respond positively to the resolution adopted at the General Conference of the Agency. We also call upon the Agency to intensify its dialogue with KEDO for the purpose of better coordination between the two organizations in this regard.

The first criticality accident in Japan occurred on 30 September at a uranium fuel conversion plant located in Tokaimura. This was highly regrettable for Japan, a country devoted to the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. My Government wishes to express its gratitude for the concern demonstrated by States and intergovernmental organizations regarding this accident. Japan reiterates its firm conviction that ensuring safety is a vital prerequisite for the utilization of atomic energy and expresses its continued willingness to supply relevant information to international organizations, including the IAEA, and other Governments. In this connection, I would like to note that a team of IAEA experts was dispatched to Japan in October on a fact-finding mission.

Allow me to touch upon the current situation of the area surrounding the site of the accident. This being essentially an irradiation accident, no major release of radioactive material occurred. Thus, the radiation level outside the facility site has been normal since the criticality ended and shielding was employed. Agricultural products and livestock, as well as the environment, including air and water in the area, are completely safe.

By the end of this year, the Accident Investigation Committee, established under the Nuclear Safety Commission of Japan, is expected to submit its final report on the investigation into the cause of the accident and on measures to be taken to prevent similar accidents. On the basis of the conclusion of this investigation, my Government is determined to take every measure necessary to secure confidence in the safety of the nuclear cycle as a whole.

I would like to conclude by affirming Japan's firm commitment to the objectives of the IAEA and its strong support for the work of the Agency.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), my friend and colleague Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his excellent presentation of the 1998 *Annual Report* of the Agency. It is also my pleasure to congratulate him, as a capable Egyptian diplomat for many years, on his efforts and role in leading the Agency in developing its activities and strengthening its role in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and other peaceful applications of nuclear technology for the welfare of humankind.

The twentieth century has witnessed clear competition in the strengthening of the military and nuclear capabilities of States and the addition of new and innovative categories of nuclear weapons to already established nuclear arsenals. It has also seen a series of nuclear tests aimed without any doubt at the development of nuclear military capabilities. As we approach the new millennium, Egypt hopes that international efforts will be directed steadfastly towards the liquidation of established military arsenals, the implementation and universality of disarmament agreements and the achievement of their ultimate goal, which is the welfare of humankind and the provision of a safer world for future generations, a world free of nuclear risks and environmental threats.

As we see a clear trend within the United Nations and among its Member States towards the achievement and protection of human rights, we might also ask ourselves about the rights of people to live in safety. Is there a paradox in the implementation of standards, or is

it an international political fallacy that should be revisited? Or is it just a fact of life imposed on us by international conditions and balances of power.

We have considered the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency and have noted the Agency's major achievements of the past year. Due to time limitations, it will be difficult for us to discuss some important areas mentioned in the report, such as nuclear safety, radioactive safety, the safety of radioactive waste and of security material. There are also other areas of importance, such as health, environment, food and agriculture. However, as we review this report, I would like to emphasize the great importance we attach to the Agency's safeguards system and its method of controlling and verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing the use of such energy for military purposes.

Despite the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the area of verification and compliance and the approval of the Board of Governors of the Model Additional Protocol in May 1997 — I am referring here to the 93 + 2 Programme, which provides the necessary legal basis for the Agency to detect undeclared nuclear materials and activities — there is still a nuclear programme at Egypt's eastern border not subject to the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system. This creates a very serious situation in the whole region.

As Egypt attaches great importance to the goal of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world and support for the comprehensive safeguards system, we believe that achieving progress in these fields, especially in the Middle East region, is urgently needed. The threat exists as a result of outdated deterrence strategies and Israel's arrogant refusal to implement the comprehensive safeguards system in its nuclear facilities. This threatens the stability and security of the region as a whole.

With this in mind, Egypt has taken the initiative since 1974 of endeavouring to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. A similar call has been promoted by the General Assembly since 1980, and has been adopted by consensus. We have followed that path. There were also other international efforts strengthened by the initiative declared by President Mubarak on 18 April 1990 that calls for establishing an area free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This came as a natural extension of Egypt's established and resolute call for a nuclear-weapon-free area in the Middle East.

In support of these efforts, and based on this strong belief, Egypt has called for the application of the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system by the Agency itself to all nuclear facilities in the Middle East. Despite all this, Israel still refuses to comply with international will by placing its nuclear facilities under the safeguards system.

All the Arab countries have adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). They have placed all their nuclear facilities under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system. This initiative was intended to strengthen confidence in the non-proliferation system and also to confirm the genuine intentions of Arab countries to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Despite all this, Israel is the only country in the region that has not adhered, or declared its intention to adhere, to the NPT. It still refuses to place its activities under the Agency's safeguards system.

Here we would like to stress the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT through the adherence of all States to it, without exception. There is no doubt that the convening of the 2000 Review Conference on the basis of the 1995 indefinite extension package, and the three decisions that were adopted, presents an opportunity that we must not let pass to implement the resolution on the Middle East. This would support the non-proliferation system in the world and would preserve the credibility of the Treaty itself.

The IAEA carries out extensive efforts in the field of the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to developing States through technical cooperation programmes provided by the Agency to the Member States. We have seen the Agency's 1998 *Annual Report* and the information it contains on the activities of the Agency under the technical cooperation programmes.

As Egypt attaches great importance to the various aspects of non-proliferation within the Agency's activities, it still believes that technical cooperation complements the activities and credibility of the Agency. It is also part and parcel of its efforts to extend the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Therefore, it is part of the international community's efforts to promote the peaceful use of this kind of energy.

In this regard, Egypt would like to draw attention to the current difficult situation of the technical cooperation fund, and we would like to appeal to all donor States to give higher priority to the role of the Agency in the field

of technical cooperation for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Finally, Egypt would again like to confirm its confidence in the important role carried out by the IAEA in opening new horizons in the fields of economic development and the welfare of peoples through strengthening and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy on all levels. This can be achieved through the effective implementation of the safeguards system which is being developed and strengthened in accordance with the new global requirements.

Mr. Polurez (Ukraine): On behalf of the Ukrainian delegation, I would like to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei for his comprehensive introduction of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report to the Assembly. We wish the Director General every success in further promoting the noble goals of the Agency.

Since its establishment more than 40 years ago, the IAEA has made a unique contribution to promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Thanks to its technical cooperation programmes, the know-how of nuclear applications in such diverse areas as agriculture, health, industry and water resources management has become available to a growing numbers of countries.

We would also note the IAEA's indispensable role in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Recognizing the importance of the Agency's safeguards system as an integral element of the non-proliferation regime, Ukraine ratified its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA two years ago. Today our common goal should be the application of the strengthened safeguards in all States.

In this context, we welcome the IAEA's efforts to realize the full potential of the strengthened safeguards through universal adherence to the Model Additional Protocol, which provides the Agency with stronger tools to verify compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Let me inform the Assembly that Ukraine intends to sign the Protocol by the end of this year, after finishing consultations with the Agency and completing internal procedures.

We support the Agency's efforts regarding the implementation of the agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the application of safeguards in connection with the NPT and the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on Iraq.

My country has also supported the convening of an open-ended expert meeting in November this year to consider whether there is a need for revision of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Ukraine commends the Agency's efforts against illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources. We support the earliest possible completion of the development of a convention on combating acts of international nuclear terrorism.

Ukraine is actively cooperating with the IAEA within the technical assistance project on an illicit-trafficking database. Here I would like to express our appreciation for the Agency's important coordinating role in rendering international assistance to build up the physical protection system in my country.

The delegation of Ukraine notes with satisfaction our country's broadening technical cooperation with the IAEA, which embraces the basic directions of its activities in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We are also satisfied with the movement in the implementation of technical assistance projects in Ukraine, as well as with the broad involvement of our representatives in the Agency's regional projects of technical assistance. All these projects are of great practical importance for my country.

As the global centre for international cooperation in the field of nuclear, radiation and waste safety, the Agency is making an important contribution to the development of an effective worldwide safety regime. Ukraine is in favour of the elaboration of an international convention on the safety of radiation sources and is taking the necessary measures for adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. We note with satisfaction the Agency's activity to enhance the safety of nuclear power plants in Central and Eastern Europe. It is quite obvious that this is a long-term task, but we should nonetheless pursue it with determination. In addition, this year the International Atomic Energy Agency has also focused on assisting member States to manage the Y2K problem in respect of nuclear facilities, as well as medical facilities that use radiation sources.

The positive outcome of the Agency's effort to strengthen nuclear safety was evident this spring at the first review meeting of the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, where States' reports on their safety practices were subject to peer review.

The problem of the safety of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant remains a focus of attention for Ukraine's Government and for the whole international community.

In this respect let me briefly inform the Assembly about the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the G-7, the European Commission and Ukraine on the closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was signed in Ottawa in December 1995.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding, the completion of construction of compensatory power units is among the preconditions for the decommissioning of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The delay in putting into operation the units of the nuclear power plants at Rivne and Khmelnytsky is a source of particular concern to my Government. Let me stress here that achieving the final goals of the Memorandum of Understanding will be possible only on the condition that the G-7 and the European Commission take appropriate emergency steps aimed at securing the necessary financial resources for this purpose. Otherwise, the failure of the agreements achieved regarding Chernobyl would produce a negative reaction both in Ukraine and in other States, as well as adversely affect our common cause relating to the safe utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

In this regard, my delegation highly appreciates the decisions of the pledging conference convened two years ago in New York. We are grateful to the G-7 Governments, the European Commission and Governments of other donor States for their pledges made for the realization of the shelter implementation plan.

The decisions of the pledging conference have given a strong impetus to the practical steps aimed at the fulfilment of the Memorandum. At present more than $393 million has been pledged to the Chernobyl shelter fund and some $200 million has already been credited to the relevant accounts in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. However, $768 million is needed to complete the shelter implementation plan. In this respect, we are deeply satisfied with and strongly support the decision of the G-7 Summit in Cologne to convene the second pledging conference by the summer of 2000. We would like to appeal to the international community to support this very important initiative and express our hope that the necessary funds will be collected. Only through common efforts will we be able to eliminate the Chernobyl problem.

Traditionally Ukraine joins in sponsoring the draft resolution entitled "Report of the International Atomic Agency". We believe that this year's draft resolution reflects the interests of the international community in the work of the Agency in a balanced manner. The IAEA is widely regarded as an organization of excellence. We are confident that the adoption of the amendments to articles VI and XIV of the IAEA statute will strengthen this view. We believe that the IAEA can look forward to the new millennium with optimism. I wish to conclude by reiterating Ukraine's commitment to the Agency's goals.

Mr. Nene (South Africa): My delegation would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his statement and commend the Agency for its work over the past year. During this period, we have seen progress in several areas of the IAEA's activities, most notably the agreement on the enlargement of the Board of Governors, the growing number of countries that have signed the model Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreements and developments with regard to the trilateral initiative between the Russian Federation, the United States and the IAEA.

In our view, the Agency is succeeding in the fulfilment of its mandate and we feel that the report for 1999, as well as the statement of the Director General, clearly shows that all important facets in the field of nuclear technology are currently being covered by the Agency. We congratulate the Agency not only on addressing its objective of seeking to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, but also ensuring that no diversion of nuclear material or equipment is taking place. We also remain confident that the IAEA is well positioned to enable us to rise to the new challenges ahead of us. My delegation therefore wishes to commend Mr. ElBaradei for his efforts in ensuring that the Agency remains a technically strong, professionally capable, financially viable and administratively well-managed organization.

There have been many developments of interest in the field of nuclear technology and in the activities of the Agency over the past year, but I would like to focus on

a few that we consider to be particularly important: technical cooperation, safeguards and safety issues.

In the field of technical cooperation, we note the high degree of success that the Agency has achieved in implementing technical cooperation projects, and we would like to commend the secretariat for its efficiency in administering these projects. It is in Africa especially where we have witnessed the expansion of technical cooperation in myriad fields. In addition, the role and activities of the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) in assuring that the benefits of nuclear technology are made available to the countries of our continent need to be mentioned. South Africa welcomes the Agency's continued involvement in AFRA and encourages the Director General and the Agency to continue working closely with member States from Africa to ensure that technical cooperation makes a meaningful contribution in key areas vital for sustainable development. Much more, however, needs to be done, and here there is no way of escaping the issue of resources.

In this connection, I wish to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the commitment given at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, in paragraph 19 of the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" contained in the annex to document NPT/Conf.1995/32 (Part I):

> "Every effort should be made to ensure that the IAEA has the financial and human resources necessary in order to meet effectively its responsibilities in the [area] of technical cooperation".

My delegation expresses its appreciation to those members of the Agency, both donor and developing countries, that have contributed to the Technical Cooperation Fund. Their commitment will undoubtedly bring us closer to the attainment of this important component of the 1995 principles and objectives. Implementation of these technical cooperation projects would certainly contribute to much-needed social upliftment and sustainable development in all developing countries.

Moving on now to the other main pillar of the IAEA, my delegation wishes to stress our support for the safeguards verification system. It is not only a mechanism for ensuring that no diversion of nuclear material or equipment is taking place, but also an essential confidence-building measure. The conclusion of negotiations on the Model Protocol Additional to Safeguards Agreements as a means to strengthen the safeguards system was a major milestone for the Agency. South Africa reiterates its commitment to the Additional Protocol. We note with satisfaction that 43 countries have already signed additional protocols with the Agency, and urge others to follow suit. By concluding the additional protocols, States parties give their commitment to ensuring that their nuclear activities are entirely above board.

My delegation is also encouraged to learn of the progress regarding the trilateral initiative between the Russian Federation, the United States and the IAEA on the question of nuclear material from decommissioned weapons and stockpiles. This is an important development, and we welcome progress in this effective extension of the safeguards system.

It goes without saying, though, that as the safeguards and verification process expands to more facilities and countries, the cost of safeguards will increase. My delegation would therefore caution member Sates of the IAEA not to insist on the notions of zero nominal and zero real growth in the regular budget of the Agency, which we regard as artificial barriers obstructing the Agency from fully implementing its mandate. We believe that if these barriers continue to be adhered to, the Agency will be left to run the gauntlet of the reduction of costs on one side, and the demand for more resources on the other. As this demand for more resources grows, so will the reliance of the Agency on extrabudgetary funding. This is a dangerous path to follow.

South Africa is fully supportive of the Agency's efforts towards the establishment of a common and coherent philosophy for radiation safety, nuclear safety and the safety of radioactive waste disposal. The safe, environmentally friendly and economic treatment and disposal of all waste associated with radioactive substances remains a highly emotional issue. The Agency will in the future be further challenged to contribute to addressing the greater sensitivity of people towards nuclear power, the decommissioning of ageing nuclear plants and facilities and the strengthening of the safety of existing plants.

South Africa therefore attaches great importance to the work that has thus far been done by the Agency on nuclear, radiation and waste safety. As a contracting party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, we believe that the first international peer review meeting, held in Vienna in April this year, contributed positively to

ensuring that adequate and harmonized standards of nuclear safety are maintained throughout the world. Furthermore, South Africa remains fully committed to the principles and objectives of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Waste management practices will grow in stature and will remain a people's issue, a business imperative, a sensitive subject of government debate and a technological challenge. The international community, through the leadership of the IAEA, needs to tackle this challenge in a holistic manner to ensure that generations that follow us will view the legacy they inherit positively.

I would be remiss if I did not address the matter of the amendment of article VI of the IAEA statute. A lot has been said in the last 24 years on this issue. Therefore, my delegation would merely like to express our satisfaction with the successful conclusion of this long-outstanding matter. At last we have reached a point where through compromise, understanding and consensus we can address the expansion of the Board of Governors of the Agency from 35 to 43 members and the allocation of each member State to one of the areas listed in that article. My delegation congratulates all member States on their efforts to find a solution and sees this spirit of cooperation as a good omen for the new millennium.

The last decade has seen significant advances in the quest for global peace and security, but we still face serious challenges. The IAEA remains pivotal, not only for the advancement of the uses of atoms for peace, but also in the furtherance of non-proliferation as a critical step along the road towards ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Tiwathia (India): The Indian delegation has taken note of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) presented by the Agency's Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei.

Let me begin by expressing India's satisfaction at the historic agreement reached by the General Conference on the amendment of article VI of the IAEA's statute, which will lead to an expansion of the Board of Governors of the IAEA. The spirit of consensus and cooperation exhibited by the member States of the IAEA led to the resolution of this long-standing issue. We hope that a similar spirit prevails while dealing with other relevant issues at the IAEA, particularly those related to promotional aspects.

The primary function of the Agency, as drawn from the statute, is to encourage and assist research, development and practical applications of atomic energy for peaceful purposes throughout the world. This has been endorsed by the senior expert group appointed by the Director General in early 1998, whose recommendations have been highlighted in the report. In developing countries, atomic energy — with its multiple applications in power generation, improving health standards, enhancing the quality and quantity of agricultural yields, pest controls and water resources management — is seen as the key to a better future. The IAEA's role is particularly significant in nuclear power as, with the progressive depletion of fossil fuels, this is an important option that will be needed to meet the future energy needs of developing countries in the long term.

While the decision to pursue the nuclear-power option is a national one, the Agency's mandate to promote in an objective manner the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity should not be eroded while it discharges its responsibility to help ensure safety and implement safeguards. The secretariat has become defensive on matters relating to nuclear power, perhaps influenced by the environment in which it is located, where support for new nuclear plants has declined as power generation in general has reached a point of saturation.

However, while nuclear power may be stagnating in Europe and North America, it is growing fast in Asia and some other parts of the world, because it is a logical option to meet energy needs in the context of global environmental considerations. Current global carbon dioxide emissions would have been 8 per cent higher if nuclear power had not been used. We therefore call upon the Agency to intensify its efforts in projecting nuclear energy as one of the means of mitigating carbon dioxide emissions under the Clean Development Mechanism evolved under the Kyoto Protocol for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

For Indians to reach a standard of living comparable to that of the people who live in developed countries, it has been estimated that the per-capita consumption of electricity should increase by a factor of at least 8 to 10. Nuclear energy will account for an increasing share of the electricity mix in India. As a first step, we will try to reach 20,000 megawatts of nuclear power by the year 2020. Over the last year, our efforts to accelerate our nuclear-power programme to reach that target have borne fruit. The capacity utilization of our 10 nuclear-power plants has improved consistently. A state-of-the-art and indigenously designed 220-megawatt pressurized heavy water reactor was recently commissioned at Kaiga,

Karnataka, and new power reactor units are expected to reach criticality soon. The power programme has a wide support base ranging from fuel fabrication to electronics and heavy-water facilities.

To ensure long-term energy security, India has chosen to follow a closed fuel cycle policy, which calls for the setting up of reprocessing plants and breeder reactors. Our fast breeder test reactor at Kalpakkam, over a decade old, has achieved all technological objectives. The indigenously developed, and hitherto untried, plutonium with mixed uranium-plutonium carbide fuel has performed excellently. With the experience gained from the fast breeder test reactor, the indigenous design and development of the 500-megawatt prototype fast breeder reactor is progressing well, and construction is expected to begin in 2001. An advanced heavy water reactor using plutonium and uranium 233 as fuel is being designed at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). Advanced heavy water reactors constitute the third stage of our nuclear-power programme; they will mark a transition to thorium-based systems, as they will use as fuel the U233 obtained by the irradiation of thorium in the prototype heavy water reactors and the fast breeder reactors.

Mature technologies for reprocessing, waste management and recycling of plutonium and depleted uranium have been demonstrated and are available. Progress is also being made on the thorium-uranium 233 cycle. We mention this because of our great interest in the closed nuclear fuel cycle. We have always considered spent fuel a vital resource material and have emphasized this during the negotiations on the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

Recent developments abroad have shown that we should continue to attach the highest importance to nuclear safety. The safety record of our facilities is stringently monitored by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board of India. It has set up an independent Safety Research Institute whose task is to carry out and promote safety-related research and analysis in areas relevant to regulatory decision-making. In the context of the Y2K problem, the Government of India has set up a High-Level Action Force to monitor the status of preparedness in various critical sectors of the economy, including atomic energy; an in-depth review, including inventory preparation, detailed assessment and remedial action, has been undertaken; and detailed contingency plans have been drawn up. We are now actively considering India's accession to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, whose standards of physical protection we have followed for a long time.

We appreciate the Agency's efforts to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. However, to stop the clandestine acquisition of sensitive technology, the total commitment of all the member States of the Agency is required; whenever this commitment has faltered, there have been lapses. India's non-proliferation credentials have been impeccable. We have in place export-control mechanisms which have ensured that no material, equipment or technology exported from India has been misused. However, while our commitment to genuine non-proliferation is consistent, we object to discriminatory restrictions on access to materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes, under the guise of proliferation concerns.

While we regard power generation as a matter of priority, non-power applications of nuclear energy in areas such as medicine, isotope hydrology, agriculture and industry are given equal importance in our research and development programme. As a founding member of the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) for Asia and the Pacific, we are actively involved in a number of RCA activities in these areas and have been regularly hosting its meetings. India continues to support the Agency's technical cooperation activities and pays regularly and in full its contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund. As part of the Technical Cooperation for Developing Countries programme, we have offered the BARC Training School as a "Centre of Excellence" which will be open to scientists and engineers from developing countries. India also has an extensive network of institutions engaged in fundamental research. We have done a fair amount of research in accelerators and in fusion technology.

The IAEA is a unique multidisciplinary science and technological agency within the United Nations system. It should continue to be guided by the principle that its credibility is based on its scientific and technical competence. This can be maintained only if the Agency keeps itself at the forefront of nuclear science and technology by assisting in the coordination of research and development programmes among interested member States and institutions. Towards this end, research in frontier areas such as innovative reactors and thermonuclear fusion should be actively encouraged.

As the Agency prepares to meet the challenges of the coming century, it should remain faithful to its

original mandate as a promoter of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Over the years the changed orientation of the Agency has led to a worrisome situation wherein, from being a positive, creative force, the Agency is in danger of being looked upon as a police body. The IAEA must appreciate its unique position as the only international organization, not only in the United Nations family but globally, with the mandate to promote the widest possible participation in, and thereby access to benefits from, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The recent Scientific Forum on "Sustainable Development: A Role for Nuclear Power?", held to coincide with the General Conference, was a healthy step in this direction and helped to restore in some measure the original scientific character of the Agency. We commend the IAEA for organizing the meeting and urge it to implement its recommendations.

Mr. Pe (Myanmar): At the outset, allow me to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for the annual report that is before us. We observe that the report highlights the IAEA's growing role in building a global nuclear safety culture, in underpinning the non-proliferation regime and in maximizing the contribution of nuclear science and technology to helping countries achieve their national development goals.

I would like to take this opportunity to refer to a few activities covered in the report. It is encouraging to note that the Agency's role in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy now covers areas ranging from power generation to a diverse array of industrial, medical and agricultural applications. In this regard, we would like to lend support to the continuation and strengthening of IAEA activities concerning food and agriculture, as they constitute the practical application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in areas of particular importance to developing countries.

In the area of technical cooperation, my delegation firmly believes that an expansion of technical cooperation activities relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should take into account the special needs of the developing countries. My delegation is also appreciative of the measures, including Country Programme Frameworks, being implemented under the technical cooperation programme.

Let me briefly touch upon Myanmar's cooperation with the IAEA. Myanmar's endeavours for development and the application of nuclear science and technology have started to gather momentum, with the establishment of the Ministry of Science and Technology and the setting up of the Department of Atomic Energy as a new directorate in 1997. The IAEA has been assisting us with agriculture-related projects. As a matter of fact, there is an ongoing programme in Myanmar which uses the method of radiation-induced mutations for new varieties of crops. My country has also participated in the Agency's technical programmes. For instance, we have implemented a project on improving livestock breeding through the application of feed supplementation strategies and the immunoassay technique.

As we are all aware, water continues to be a critical global issue. One particular manifestation of concern is the growing interest expressed by Member States in nuclear technology for desalinization. Therefore, my delegation commends efforts by the IAEA to initiate joint programmes and collaboration with other United Nations agencies in the area of water resource development and management.

Turning to radiation safety, my delegation considers that the radiation safety programme undertaken by the Agency is of paramount importance, since the programme's objective is to promote adequate levels of protection against ionizing radiation and for the safety of radiation sources. It cannot be overemphasized that the programme served to generate practical manuals and other documents to assist in standards implementation by regulatory authorities. Among the Agency's others activities, the completion of three safety guides on occupational radiation protection is no less important, and it is also a remarkable achievement.

At the dawn of the next millennium, the international community is faced with daunting challenges to peace, security and development in the world. In this context, we would like to underscore the importance of worldwide moves towards a strengthened non-proliferation regime. There is no denying that, through its verification and safeguards system, the Agency has made significant contributions to the strengthening of a global nuclear non-proliferation regime. One tangible result of the Agency's continued efforts aimed at the development and implementation of measures to strengthen its safeguards system was the conclusion at the end of 1998 of safeguards agreements with 126 States. In this connection, my delegation would like to reiterate that all IAEA safeguards and verification measures should be applied in a non-discriminatory manner and in conformity

with the relevant provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its high esteem for the work of the Agency and reaffirm its commitment and support for the IAEA.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation expresses its gratitude to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the annual report of the Agency, which provides a detailed description of IAEA activities.

The Russian Federation consistently supports the productive activities of the IAEA. We would like to see it continue as an international organization with a strong reputation, actively promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy and conducting verification activities, which are a key element of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In today's complex situation, when the existing non-proliferation regime is being severely tested, it becomes increasingly important to use the Agency's potential to successfully complete the task of achieving non-proliferation on a lasting basis. As one of the depositary States of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Russia confirms its unswerving support for its basic principles. We resolutely oppose any attempts to revise the Treaty, and call upon all countries to recognize their responsibility for observing and strengthening the mechanism that has been effectively preventing the spread of nuclear weapons all over the world for more than a quarter of a century.

In the context of nuclear energy development, Russia considers the reduction and disposal of nuclear armaments to be connected with the peaceful use of the tremendous scientific and technological potential that used to be the exclusive domain of military programmes. We see the role of the Agency as one of coordinating international cooperation with a view to choosing economically sound and environmentally safe uses of weapons-grade materials in the civilian nuclear-fuel cycle.

Control of materials released from weapons programmes is a new direction in IAEA activities. Perhaps for the first time since its inception, the Agency is facing a task of such great technological, social and political importance. In this regard, the joint work of experts from Russia, the United States and the IAEA, within the framework of the 1996 trilateral initiative concerning the application of the Agency's verification procedures to weapons-grade fissile materials, has great significance. The work is progressing in accordance with the schedule approved by the three parties.

We note with satisfaction that throughout its entire history, the Agency has deservedly enjoyed a high reputation as an international organization competent in the nuclear field, and that it has taken every effort necessary to assist Member States in developing the nuclear power industry.

All current studies prove the need for the structural conversion of power sources now in use to what are called carbon-free power technologies. Without denying the importance of developing renewable power sources, we should admit that at present the only realistic industrial-scale solution to this problem is to intensify efforts to develop a safe, environmentally acceptable and economically attractive nuclear power sector. Will the nuclear power industry be equal to a task of this magnitude? We answer that question in the affirmative. And the mission of the IAEA, as stipulated in its Statute, is precisely to unite the efforts of interested parties in order to find the best way to develop the nuclear power industry in the twenty-first century.

In our opinion, the activities of the Agency in providing technical assistance to developing countries in the implementation of priority programmes in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are extremely important, and despite Russia's current economic difficulties, we are participating in IAEA technical cooperation programmes by supplying equipment and by conducting training courses and organizing fieldwork for experts from developing countries.

The assurance of an appropriate level of nuclear safety remains the top priority in the development both of the nuclear power industry and of nuclear technologies. We note with satisfaction the increased role of the IAEA in this field. In particular, the Agency's fruitful activities in the preparation and holding of the First Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety merit approval. The constructive spirit in evidence at that forum made it possible to evaluate objectively the current status of virtually the entire stock of nuclear reactors in operation.

From our point of view, the IAEA-sponsored International Conference on the Strengthening of Nuclear Safety in Eastern Europe marked a productive conclusion

to the IAEA Extrabudgetary Programme on WWER and RBMK Safety. Russian experts take full account of the results and conclusions of that forum in their work on enhancing the safety of nuclear power plants.

The Agency's efforts in addressing the problem of the safe management of radioactive waste are worthy of approval and support. The completion of work on the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management is a great achievement in this respect.

We think that the future of the nuclear power industry can be shaped only on the solid basis of the reliable operation of currently functioning nuclear facilities. At the same time, both operative and decommissioned nuclear plants equally deserve attention of the Agency in terms of their safety, the improvement of economic indicators and the extension of their service life.

We also support IAEA activities to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear materials, activities that are aimed at raising the level of physical protection and at developing national inventory and verification systems for nuclear materials. We advocate the expansion of cooperation among States in the suppression of nuclear smuggling.

Russia consistently supports IAEA activities intended to improve the safeguards system. The Agency's verification activities should remain among the highest priorities, making possible a technically precise, politically impartial and legally irreproachable analysis of the nature of the nuclear-related activities of non-nuclear States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Russian Federation would like to join other delegations in expressing approval of the 1998 annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Morel (Seychelles), Vice-President, in the Chair.

Announcement

The Acting President: I should like to say a few words concerning punctuality. Members will recall that at the 3rd plenary meeting, on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly approved the practical suggestion by the Secretary-General that each delegation should designate someone to be present at the scheduled starting time of each meeting. At the same meeting, representatives were further reminded that a 10-minute delay of the start of every meeting at Headquarters would result in a waste of $800,000 a year. In this connection, I should like to urge all delegations to make a special effort to cooperate in this regard so that all meetings can start promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.